

REMARKS

Claims 25-29 are pending in the present application.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough review and examination of the application to date. In the Office Action dated September 14, 2006, the Examiner continued to reject claims 1, 3, 7-12, 14-21, and 23-24 of the present application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of some combination of Japanese Patent Application Pub. No. JP 61165583 (Takeichi); U.S. Patent No. 4,811,507 (Blanchet); U.S. Patent No. 6,846,094 (Luk); and/or U.S. Patent No. 5,537,297 (Ghandehari). Although Applicants do not agree that these obviousness rejections are appropriate, Applicants have cancelled claims 1, 3, 7-12, 14-21, and 23-24.

In the Office Action dated September 14, 2006, the Examiner also rejected claims 25 and 27 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,676,284 (Wynne Willson). Furthermore, claims 26 and 28-29 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,676,284 (Wynne Willson) in combination with various prior art references. However, as reflected on page 11 of the Office Action, the Examiner's primary concern appears to be the use of the phrase "essentially solid and substantially rod-like member," and whether such a term would encompass the construction described by Wynne Willson. For the reasons set forth in response to a prior Office Action dated April 14, 2006, Applicants maintain that Wynne Willson does not teach or suggest an "essentially solid and substantially rod-like member," but rather a hollow construction comprised of a tubular outer diffuser and a tubular inner diffuser. Nevertheless, in order to address this outstanding concern, Applicants have amended claim 25 to recite "a solid rod-like member," so as to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from the cited prior art.

Accordingly, claim 25 is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 26-29 depend from claim 25 and are also each believed to be in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicants respectfully withdraw of the Final Office Action and issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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